
Over Half of Americans Give President Obama's Job Performance Positive Ratings

However, just over half of whites and matures give him negative ratings

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – March 23, 2009 – As President Barack Obama moves past his first 50 days in office, over half of Americans (55%) give him positive ratings for the overall job that he is doing, with 17% saying he is doing an excellent job and almost two in five (38%) saying he is doing a pretty good job. Just over two in five Americans (45%) give President Obama negative ratings with over one-quarter (27%) saying he is doing an only fair job and 18% saying he is doing a poor job.

Additionally, these are some of the findings of *The Harris Poll®*, a new nationwide survey of 2,355 U.S. adults surveyed online between March 9 and 16, 2009 by Harris Interactive®:

While Democrats give President Obama high marks for the first few weeks (87% positive), not surprisingly only 18% of Republicans do the same. Independents are more equally divided as 51% give the President positive marks and 49% give him negative ratings;

Nine in ten African Americans (90%) give the President positive ratings as do just under two-thirds of Hispanics (63%), but just over half (52%) of Whites give him negative ratings on the job he is doing;

People in the Midwest and South are split – with half giving President Obama positive ratings and half giving him negative ratings. Two-thirds of Easterners (66%) and over half of Westerners (56%) give him positive ratings;

Younger Americans supported Barack Obama all throughout the campaign and this support is holding strong. Over three in five (62%) Echo Boomers (those aged 18-32) give the President positive ratings compared to 53% of both Gen Xers (aged 33-44) and Baby Boomers (aged 45-63). Over half (52%) of Matures (aged 64 and older) give President Obama negative ratings;

While two-thirds of Americans (68%) still think that this country is moving off on the wrong track, one-third (32%) believe that things are heading in the right direction. Before the inauguration, 19% of Americans believed things were going in the right direction while 72% said they were going off on the wrong track. In the past, this question was asked by telephone where people were allowed to volunteer a not sure response. Now it is being asked online and that option is not available – what is interesting to note is that most of those who were not sure or declined to answer in January moved to the positive side which partly explains the rise in that number but why the wrong track number has only moved slightly;

The reason for things in the country moving off on the wrong track is clear and this is one of the more pressing things for the Obama Administration. Half of Americans (50%) think the economy is one of the two most important issues for the government to

address. Also, one in five adults (21%) say employment and jobs are one of the most important issues, while 6% say the budget and government spending and 8% say it is regulating the banking and the financial services industry; and,

Health care continues to be a concern to Americans as 25% cite it as a most important issue while 9% say the war is a most important issue to address.

So What?

As the drumbeat of bad economic news continues and as Americans cite the economy as the most important issue, they are still giving President Obama positive marks for the job he has been doing these first 60 or so days in office. But, two-thirds of Americans also still think the country is going off on the wrong track and the honeymoon the President has will not continue indefinitely. As the countdown for the first 100 days continues, people will be looking for things to make them feel better and more economically secure. If they don't find it, and if the mood of the country does not improve, the President Obama's honeymoon may be short lived.

**TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING**

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Race/Ethnicity			Political Party		
		White	Black	Hispanic	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	55	48	90	63	18	87	51
Excellent	17	14	32	17	3	34	11
Pretty good	38	34	58	46	15	53	40
NEGATIVE	45	52	10	37	82	13	49
Only fair	27	30	8	24	39	12	32
Poor	18	21	2	13	43	1	16

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING – BY GENERATION AND REGION**

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Region				Generation			
		East	Midwest	South	West	Echo Boomers (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Baby Boomers (45-63)	Matures (64+)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	55	66	50	50	56	62	53	53	48
Excellent	17	24	15	12	18	19	17	14	17
Pretty good	38	42	36	38	38	43	36	39	32
NEGATIVE	45	34	50	50	44	38	47	47	52
Only fair	27	25	32	28	24	25	31	26	29
Poor	18	9	18	22	20	13	16	21	23

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
RIGHT DIRECTION OR WRONG TRACK

"Generally speaking, would you say things in the country are going in the right direction or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?"

Base: All adults

	TREND	Right Direction	Wrong Track
		%	%
2009	March	32	68
	January	19	72
2008	October	11	83
	September	16	77
	June	14	80
	April	15	75
	February	23	69
2007	December	18	74
	October	22	67
	July	19	70
	February	29	62
2006	May	24	69
	February	32	59
2005	November	27	68
	January	46	48
2004	September	38	57
	June	35	59
2003	December	35	57
	June	44	51
2002	December	36	57
	June	46	48
2001	December	65	32
	June	43	52
2000	October	50	41
	June	40	51
1999	June	37	55
	March	47	45
1998	December	43	51
	June	48	44
1997	December	39	56
	April	36	55
1996	December	38	50
	June	29	64
1995	December	26	62
	June	24	65
1994	December	29	63
	June	28	65
1993	June	21	70
	March	39	50
1992	June	12	81
	January	20	75
1991	December	17	75
	January	58	32
1990	October	20	73
	February	48	43

Note: Prior to March, 2009 this question was asked via telephone

TABLE 4
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS
 "What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?"
Spontaneous, unprompted replies

Base: All Adults

	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	07	08	08	08	09	089
	Ma	Jan	Feb	Aug	Dec	Dec	June	Oct	Aug	Jun	Oct	Feb	Apr	Oct	Jan	Mar.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The economy (non-specific)	8	9	7	5	32	34	25	28	19	14	13	41	47	64	59	50
Employment/jobs	5	3	4	4	7	8	8	10	3	7	5	6	9	5	20	21
Healthcare (not Medicare)	10	11	12	15	5	10	14	18	11	12	25	22	17	22	16	25
(The) war	X	X	X	X	12	18	8	35	41	27	24	26	28	14	15	9
Budget/Government spending	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5	6	5	2	2	6	6
Regulating banking/financial services industries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	8
Housing	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	*	*	1	2	2	5	2	3	6
Education	15	14	21	25	12	11	13	7	8	7	6	4	5	6	5	5
Taxes	14	16	12	13	6	5	11	8	5	4	3	6	4	6	5	4
Immigration	2	1	*	1	1	1	2	2	3	20	12	12	9	3	2	4
Terrorism	X	X	X	X	22	17	11	7	7	4	4	3	2	3	2	4
Energy	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	4	2	3
Bailouts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	3
Budget deficit/National debt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	3
Foreign policy (non-specific)	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	3	3
Environment	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
Recession/Depression	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	2
Iraq	*	*	1	X	X	11	3	9	6	8	14	14	10	7	4	2
National security	X	X	2	2	6	3	6	5	2	2	2	5	2	5	4	2
Homeland/domestic security/public safety	X	X	X	X	8	9	3	6	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
Military/defense	2	2	2	4	4	1	5	3	1	4	2	2	2	2	2	2
Downsizing government	X	X	X	1	*	X	X	1	*	1	1	1	*	*	1	1
Domestic/social issues (non-specific)	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	1
Gas and oil prices	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	10	8	2	1	10	1	2	1
Ethics in government	*	*	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Social security	6	6	24	16	3	2	4	4	10	5	3	4	3	3	1	1
Honesty/Integrity/Moral Values	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Abortion	2	2	2	6	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Drugs	8	6	2	5	2	3	3	*	2	1	3	1	1	*	1	1
Inflation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	2	3	*	2	*	1	1
Judicial/Legal Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	1
(Programs for) the poor/poverty	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	*	4	4	4	4	1	*	1	1
Same sex rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	2	*	*	1	*	*	1
Crime/violence	19	13	8	10	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	*
Medicare	4	5	5	6	1	1	4	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	*
Middle East peace process between Palestinians and Israel	X	X	X	X	2	2	2	*	1	*	*	*	*	1	1	*
Peace/world peace/nuclear arms	1	3	3	1	2	2	3	*	1	1	2	1	*	*	1	*
Welfare	14	8	4	2	1	1	3	*	3	1	2	1	1	*	1	*
Religion (decline of)	*	1	*	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	*	1	*
Homelessness	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	*	1	1	3	2	2	*	1	*
Programs for the elderly (not Medicare/Social Security)	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	*	*	*	1	1	*	1	*	*
Human/civil/women's rights	2	1	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	2	*	1	*	*	*

Family values (decline of)	2	1	2	1	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	*	*	*
Obama/president	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	*	*	*	*	*
Second Amendment (right to bear arms)	X	*	*	*	*	X	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	X	*	*
AIDS	*	1	X	*	*	*	2	X	*	*	1	*	*	X	*	*
Medical research	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	2	1	*	2	*	*	X	*	*
Other ¹	8	19	2	19	3	8	8	8	1	6	5	4	4	15	2	5
Not sure/refused/no issue	9	12	16	18	11	10	12	9	8	6	8	3	2	4	4	4

* = Less than 0.5%, X = Not mentioned as specific issue

¹ Including prescription drug prices, credit problems, trade, disability, corporate scandals, youth and government (other)

Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked via telephone

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States March 9 and 16, 2009 among 2,355 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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